# Energy Briefs

Helping You Live Energy Efficiently!

## ENERGY STAR Appliances

When you're shopping for appliances, think of two price tags. The first one covers the purchase price—think of it as a down payment. The second price tag is the cost of operating the appliance during its lifetime. You'll be paying on that second price tag in the form of your monthly utility bill for the next 10 to 20 years, depending on the appliance.

### Be Smart Shopper

When you do have to shop for a new appliance, look for the ENERGY STAR label. ENERGY STAR products usually exceed minimum federal standards by a substantial amount. ENERGY STAR qualified appliances incorporate advanced technologies that use 10–50% less energy and water than standard models. The money you save on your utility bills can more than make up for the cost of a more expensive but more efficient ENERGY STAR model.

Federal law requires that a bright yellow EnergyGuide tag be attached to many home appliances, including refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, and clothes washers. The EnergyGuide tag provides an estimate of how much the energy to operate a particular appliance will cost. The tag also shows a range of energy use, from the lowest rated to the highest, for appliances of comparable size and type.

Choose a model that has a low operating cost. For example, an EnergyGuide tag for an electric refrigerator may show the most thrifty energy user requires 700 kilowatt-hours of electricity each year to operate, while a less efficient model requires 1,200 kilowatt-hours. Both are the same size and color, and have identical features. However, the more efficient model will cost less than $70 a year to operate, while the other will cost over $120.

### Cooking

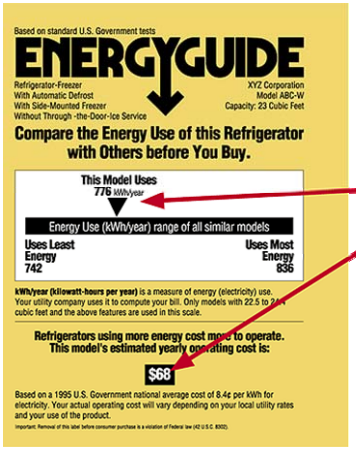
There are many new types of burners for electric cook-tops, including solid disk elements, radiant elements under glass, or high-tech halogen or induction elements. While several of these save energy, their main advantages are ease of cleaning, greater control and other amenities. The cost of electric cooking with standard coils is usually so

### Look For the ENERGY STAR Label

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.

### How to Read the EnergyGuide Label

The EnergyGuide label gives you two important pieces of information you can use to compare different brands and models when shopping for a new appliance:




**1.** Estimated energy consumption on a scale showing a range for similar models.

**2.** Estimated yearly operating cost based on the national average cost of electricity.


**South Carolina Energy Office * 1201 Main Street, Suite 430 * Columbia, SC 29201**
**(803) 737-8030 * 1-800-851-8899 * Fax (803) 737-9846 * www.energy.sc.gov**

low for a family that it is difficult to justify these more expensive options solely on the value of the energy saved.

Other appliances, such as microwaves and convection ovens, can reduce the energy required for cooking by more than one third. By releasing less heat into the home, they can also help lower air conditioning needs.

**Food Storage**

Refrigerators and freezers typically use the most energy of all kitchen and laundry appliances, especially if you have older units. Recent federal regulations have led to dramatic improvements in their efficiency which means much lower operating costs. The most efficient 20 cubic-foot refrigerators, complete with automatic defrost, cost less than $50 a year to operate. If you have an older refrigerator, it may be worthwhile to trade it in on a new, high efficiency model. *Do not* plug-in that old clunker in the utility room, especially if it was manufactured before 1993! The $120 or so it costs to operate yearly can make the food it stores expensive. Plugging a second refrigerator in only when you need the extra storage can save on electricity costs and does not harm the unit.

**Dishwashing**

Over 80% of the energy used by a dishwasher can be for heating water. Models that use less water not only save this precious resource, but energy, too. A model with a booster heater will allow you to set the temperature on your water heater to 120°F yet still have water temperatures in the dishwasher of 140°F. The lower temperature setting for the water heater reduces the risk of scalding and saves you money. Using the air dry feature and operating the unit only when full saves even more.

**Laundry**

The energy used by clothes washers is also primarily for heating water. Models that use less water use less energy. The horizontal axis machines, which are popular in Europe, are entering the U.S. market. Since they tumble the clothes, they do not have an agitator. They use less water and detergent and spin the clothes faster, resulting in shorter drying time. To save energy on drying clothes, buy a clothes dryer that has a moisture sensor to prevent overdrying. Eliminate energy costs altogether with a "solar clothes dryer." You can buy a clothesline at any hardware store for just a couple of dollars. Be sure to hang it away from overhanging trees!

**Did you know . . .**

**You may be eligible to receive federal tax incentives for purchasing certain ENERGY STAR appliances?**

**Learn more at www.energy.sc.gov, under the Residential Tax Incentive section.**

*Based on information provided by Southface Energy Institute.
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